

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HONORING BLUE STAR AS A DISTINGUISHED LEADER IN CENTRAL FLORIDA FOR PRIDE MONTH

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 28, 2022

Mr. SOTO. Madam Speaker, Blue Star (she/her) is an Atlanta native and retired professional ballet dancer that has been curating art in Orlando for over two decades. A creator, business owner, and philanthropist, Blue has helped change the fabric of the Orlando community and creates safe spaces for the LGBTQIA community and their allies. She is the founder of her own 501(c)(3) cancer organization—The Barber Fund—and the owner of BlueLaLa Events Entertainment and Consulting. She is also a former entertainment and board member of Come Out With Pride and Ivanhoe Village. She is currently on the steering committee for Equality Florida, the bidding committee for World Pride Orlando 2026, and the curator of United We Dance—an official week of remembrance event for the One Pulse Foundation.

Blue is an honoree of the Harvey Milk Trailblazer Award, Orlando Magazines Woman of the Year, and 50 Most Powerful. She was recognized by the One Pulse Foundation for her heroic efforts after the Pulse tragedy and sainted by the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence. Her artistic recognitions include best performance, favorite dancer, and best actress. Her long-standing show "VariETEASE" has been honored by many organizations for show creation, choreography, and costuming. She is also a City of Orlando honoree of the DTO Golden Brick Award and Business of the Year.

She continues to fight for human rights, create art, make music, and, of course, dance, sing, and act. She does this because art is a tool that can heal a community because we must "KEEP DANCING, ORLANDO," we must keep fighting, and we must "DO SOMETHING."

JOSEPH WOODROW HATCHETT
UNITED STATES COURTHOUSE
AND FEDERAL BUILDING

SPEECH OF

HON. ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 24, 2022

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share my concerns regarding the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act. While I support the underlying bill and appreciate that several Republican Senators finally came to the table to work with Democrats to address our nation's gun violence epidemic, I remain troubled by the legislation's possible expansion of the federal death penalty and the cre-

ation of broad new criminal offenses that may disproportionately impact Black and Brown communities.

Specifically, with regard to the expansion of the federal death penalty, I have not been given a clear answer as to the impact of the legislation's additions to the definition of "racketeering activity" in 18 U.S.C. § 1961(1), commonly known as "RICO predicates." On its face and cross referencing the impacted provisions in Title 18, it appears that murder committed in the furtherance of these new RICO predicates would trigger the federal death penalty. In states that do not have the death penalty, this creates an opportunity for federal prosecutors to seek the death penalty in states where it does not currently exist. It is possible that but for these changes, a new universe of defendants would now be subject to the federal death penalty.

The Senate Judiciary Committee staff circulated a document that appears to confirm my reading of this provision. However, the Department of Justice sent a dismissive e-mail to staff simply stating that "changes to RICO laws do not constitute an expansion of the potential applications of the federal death penalty as a matter of law." While I hope this is indeed the case, DOJ provided no citation to federal law or reference to internal Department memorandum directing charging decisions. I hope that the Department provides Congress with their legal authority on this matter expeditiously.

I also consulted several experts in the criminal justice defense community who also confirmed that this bill expands federal death penalty-eligible offenses. However, there is no consensus as to the magnitude of these expansions. While this may in fact not be a measurable expansion, I have been troubled by the lack of comprehensive legal analysis available for a reasonable understanding of the breadth of this legislation.

While I find this troubling, I will vote in favor of this bill. It should not go uncelebrated that this is the first significant legislative effort in thirty years that attempts to address the scourge of gun violence in our country. I have a long record of supporting measures to curb the epidemic of gun violence and it includes provisions I have long supported. This bill closes the boyfriend loophole for domestic abusers, enhances background checks for those aged 18 to 21 when purchasing a gun, and provides incentives to states to enact red flag laws that protects individuals in crisis from perpetuating further harm on themselves or others. But without adequate time for members and the American public to review the unintended consequences of the many provisions within the bill, many questions are left unanswered where they should not be for such a significant piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, despite my strong concerns, I applaud the bipartisan effort that went into crafting this legislation. With reservations about the bill's potential to expand the federal death penalty, I will vote for yes because of the assurance from the Department of Justice

and the positive strides towards creating safer communities that the bill seeks to achieve.

RECOGNIZING DR. CHAD AUDI

HON. RASHIDA TLAI

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 28, 2022

Ms. TLAIB. Madam Speaker, I would like to recognize the outstanding work on behalf of the people of Wayne County and southeastern Michigan by Dr. Chad Audi in his more than two decades as president of Detroit Rescue Mission, an organization dedicated to providing food, shelter, and resources to those struggling to overcome homelessness or substance abuse issues.

Dr. Audi first joined Detroit Rescue Mission as a volunteer. He was struck by the transformative impact the organization had on the countless individuals who sought assistance. In 2004, he joined Detroit Rescue Mission as president and CEO, bringing his expertise in finance and management while continuing to serve those who seek help with dignity and humility. I commend Dr. Audi and the Detroit Rescue Mission staff and volunteers on their success in offering wrap-around assistance programming throughout the coronavirus pandemic.

Please join me in recognizing Dr. Chad Audi's 20-plus years of service to the people of southeastern Michigan and Michigan's 13th District Strong.

HONORING RYAN ANTHONY BECK
AS A DISTINGUISHED LEADER IN
CENTRAL FLORIDA FOR PRIDE
MONTH

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 28, 2022

Mr. SOTO. Madam Speaker, Ryan Anthony Beck was born with his sister on August 30, 1991, in Buffalo, New York. His parents are Michael Wayne Beck and Christina Marie Beck. They lived in Buffalo, New York, until he and his sister were 6 years old and then moved to Orlando, Florida. Ryan has always had a passion for standing up for what he believes in.

He first started volunteering with the Central Florida Human Rights Campaign in 2011, one year after graduating from high school, and joined their steering committee a few years later. Diana Iwanski was the first person to ask Ryan if he could be a part of the social media team at HRC Orlando because he is very vocal on social media. Ryan still remembers that first event like it was yesterday—he had a lot of fun picking up trash for the event and it was the first real time he was around a lot of LGBTQ+ folks. Though it is hard for

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